

# Introduction

The Army of the Republic of Cyprus was founded immediately after the Declaration of Independence on the basis of Articles 129 to 132 of the 1960 Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus. It consisted of 2,000 men, 60% of whom were Greek Cypriots and 40% Turkish Cypriots. National service was not mandatory, although it could be imposed with the mutual agreement of the President (Greek Cypriot) and the Vice-President (Turkish Cypriot) of the Republic.

Following the intercommunal conflicts of 1963-64, the Turkish Cypriots withdrew from the legal Army of the Republic, in the framework of their withdrawal from the state services. At the same time, because of Turkey's threats for military action, the High Military Command for the Defence of Cyprus was established, after the transfer of a Greek Division to Cyprus. The Division operated on the island until the end of 1967, when it was withdrawn. At the same time, the Special Joint Staff of Cyprus was established in 1963, which was renamed into the National Guard General Staff in 1964.

In June 1964, the House of Representatives adopted the National Guard Law, establishing mandatory national service and setting the foundations for the establishment of the active Cyprus Army. The duration of national service was initially 18 months, and the National Guard was manned by Greek officers, who assumed the responsibility of organizing and training its personnel, with the help of volunteers who had joined the army in 1962 and 1963.

In August 1964, the National Guard was confronted, inter alia,

with the first military intervention of Turkey, consisting of air attacks in the area of Tillyria and Xeros bay, while in 1967 the National Guard intervened to solve the crisis in the area of Kofinou.

In July 1974, units of the National Guard were used by the Junta regime of Athens in the coup d' état against President Makarios. The clash of the National Guard with the legal forces that supported President Makarios, as well as with the majority of the Greek Cypriot people, weakened the National Guard to such an extent that it was incapable of confronting the Turkish forces that invaded Cyprus on 20 July 1974, on the basis that constitutional order was disrupted and on the pretext that they had to protect the Turkish Cypriots. During the two phases of the Turkish invasion (July and August 1974), the National Guard was called for the first time to fulfill its ultimate mission to defend the territorial integrity of the Republic of Cyprus. Despite the treason and in conditions of disunity, the National Guard resisted fiercely and fought tough battles, together with the Greek Force in Cyprus (ELDYK), such as those in the area of Kyrenia, in the area of Nicosia airport and within the Venetian Walls of Nicosia, causing significant losses to the invading forces and shooting down a number of enemy aircraft.

Since then, the National Guard performs a significant task. Using modern technology and staffed by well-trained officers, trained in the military schools of Greece and other countries, the National Guard has evolved into a remarkable and battle-worthy deterrence force, with a high degree of training. Following the country's accession to the EU, the National Guard participates on equal terms in the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the EU (CFSP).

Beyond its specific military duty, the National Guard participates in other activities and carries out social work, such as rendering assistance in fire-fighting, responding to natural disasters and voluntary blood donation, contributing at the same time to the education and the formation of the character of young men.

## **Emblem**

The two-headed eagle on yellow background was established as the emblem of the National Guard since its founding in 1964. It symbolises the universality of the Greek spirit.

## **Defence cooperation between Cyprus and Greece**

Given that the Cyprus problem remains unresolved and the occupation and presence of the Turkish troops continues, it is imperative to maintain, enhance and upgrade the island's defence, in the framework of the financial capabilities of the Cyprus state.

In this spirit, there exists a close and sincere cooperation with Greece, in the framework of the contractual relations of the two states and the signed bilateral agreements, forming the cornerstone of Cyprus' defence policy.